

WYCOMBE WANDERERS were shocked this week with the news that the Premier Midweek Floodlight League have decided to award last season's title to Dagenham (writes Stuart Earp).

Wanderers were due to meet either Dagenham, Hayes or Leyton in the final of last term's competition, held over due to fixture congestion, until this season.

The problems started last week when Dagenham were due to meet Hayes last Saturday in the quarter final, the winners then going on to meet Leyton in the semi-final on Tuesday. Hayes, however, were unable to meet the date set by the league as they had two players in the Isthmian League XI playing Hendon and four others on holiday. Dagenham were requested to change the date but the Essex side were unable to oblige.

After a lengthy league management committee meeting, Hayes were declared in default and Dagenham awarded the tie. They went on to thrash a weak Leyton side containing several reserves, 8-1.

Wanderers were contacted by the league and asked to play the final at Loakes Park last Thursday. But as they had already played against Oxford United on Monday and an important Rothmans Isthmian League match at Ilford on Saturday, they asked for the date to be rearranged.

Secretary Bert Crump told the league that Wycombe and Dagenham would come to an arrangement about the date

but he met with little co-operation from Dagenham, who did not seem keen to play the tie.

As no date could be agreed, the league decided to award the trophy to Dagenham, declaring Wanderers in default for not fulfilling the fixture.

The ridiculous thing about the league's decision is that Wycombe have been waiting since April to play the final but were unable to do so because Dagenham, of all people, were still heavily involved with various cup competitions.

Virtually any date after April 17, when they beat Horsham in the semi-final, would have suited Wycombe, but with Leytonstone, Dagenham and Hayes all still with P.M.F.L. matches to play in their sections, it became obvious that the final would not be played until this season.

Wycombe were obviously upset by the league's handling of the situation.

Bert Crump told me this yesterday (Monday), "I'm fed up with the whole affair, it is very bad management on behalf of the league."

The secretary pointed out that the league were not so adamant in getting the matches played last season with many match dates being swapped around.

Apart from losing the chance of taking the handsome P.M.F.L. trophy, Wanderers will undoubtedly have lost out financially. A cup final at Loakes Park would have brought in up to 2,000 spectators.



Steve Perrin (centre) powers in a drive during Wycombe Wanderers' 5-2 victory over Barking